

## KENYA AT WAR: AL-SHABAAB AND ITS ENEMIES IN EASTERN AFRICA

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### ABSTRACT

Kenya's invasion of southern Somalia, which began in October 2011, has turned into an occupation of attrition – while “blowback” from the invasion has consolidated in a series of deadly Al-Shabaab attacks within Kenya. This article reviews the background to the invasion, Operation Linda Nchi, and the prosecution of the war by Kenya's Defence Forces up to the capture of the city of Kismayo and the contest to control its lucrative port. The second section discusses Al-Shabaab's response, showing how the movement has reinvented itself to take the struggle into Kenya. We conclude that while the military defeat of Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia seems inevitable, such a victory may become irrelevant to Kenya's ability to make a political settlement with its Somali and wider Muslim communities at home.

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ON 16 OCTOBER 2011, KENYA'S armed forces invaded southern Somalia in the midst of a severe local famine and a regional drought. Their purpose was to capture the port city of Kismayo and to crush the Al-Shabaab Islamist militia.<sup>1</sup> The first aim was accomplished after more than a year of slow progress and sometimes hard fighting, but with the second aim seemingly as remote as ever after a third year of war, the capture of Kismayo looks increasingly like a hollow victory. Al-Shabaab has reacted with gun, bomb, and grenade attacks against targets in Nairobi, Garissa, and other Kenya towns, most notorious among them the assault upon Nairobi's

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1. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline', 6 March 2012, <<http://criticalthreats.org>> (24 August 2014).

prestigious Westgate shopping mall.<sup>2</sup> The “blowback” from the invasion is now having an impact on Kenya’s troubled internal politics, with recent evidence from attacks on the coastal settlement of Mpeketoni to suggest that the Islamists are skilfully exploiting local political quarrels to further their own cause.<sup>3</sup> While Kenya’s citizens come to terms with the fact they are at war, their soldiers in southern Somalia are locked into a longer-term struggle for ascendancy in Jubaland. How long can Kenya sustain this war, and can victory be ensured? Al-Shabaab has lost its economic stronghold of Kismayo, has recently suffered the death in an American attack of its leading *emir*, Ahmed ‘Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr’ Godane, and has also been forced to retreat from its training base and operational headquarters at Barawe.<sup>4</sup> The Africa Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) force, capably led by Uganda, has undoubtedly gained significant ground against Al-Shabaab’s *mujahideen*. Yet, despite its defeats, this Islamist organization remains a potent and dangerous force: it still controls much of the countryside of southern Somalia, hampering the movement of the Kenyan military and other components of AMISOM through regular ambushes<sup>5</sup> – and, meanwhile, its affiliate Al-Hijra has proved capable of bringing the war back into Kenya.<sup>6</sup>

This article analyses the impact of the Kenyan invasion. It is argued that, far from sweeping Al-Shabaab into the sea, the intervention in southern Somalia has fuelled wider political dissent within Kenya. Building on the extensive literature on eastern Africa’s recent *jihadist* struggles,<sup>7</sup> we emphasize the capacity of the Islamist group to adapt and transform. The flexibility and responsiveness of Al-Shabaab in the past has transcended its

2. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Henry Appel, ‘Al-Shabaab’s insurgency in Somalia: a data-based snapshot’, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 3 April 2014, <<http://journal.georgetown.edu/2014/04/03/al-shabaabs-insurgency-in-somalia-a-data-based-snapshot-by-daveed-gartenstein-ross-henry-appel/>> (22 August 2014).

3. Dennis Okari, ‘Mpeketoni attacks: four possibilities’, *BBC News Online*, 17 June 2014, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-27890084>> (1 July 2014).

4. Harun Maruf and Dan Joseph, ‘Sources on final days of Al-Shabaab’s Godane’, *Voice of America News*, 3 October 2014, <<http://www.voanews.com/content/al-shaba-ahmed-abdi-godane-lower-shabelle-somalia/2463394.html>> (3 October 2014); Emmanuel Igunza, ‘Somali troops in full control of Barawe’, *BBC On-line*, 6 October 2014, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29510216>> (7 October 2014).

5. Bronwyn Bruton and Paul D. Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia: Lessons learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia 2007–2013* (US Joint Special Operations University, Tampa, FL, 2014).

6. Fredrick Nzes, ‘Al-Hijra: Al-Shabab’s affiliate in Kenya’, *CTC Sentinel* 7, 5 (2014), pp. 24–6.

7. Roland Marchal, ‘A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, 3 (2009), pp. 381–404; Roland Marchal, ‘The rise of a jihadi movement in a country at war: Harakat al Shabaab al Mujahiddin in Somalia’ (CERI Research Paper, Sciences Po, Paris, 2011), <[http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/art\\_RM2.pdf](http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf)> (10 June 2014); Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: History and ideology of a militant Islamist group, 2005–2012* (Hurst, London, 2013).

internal factionalisms between nationalist and internationalist *jihadi* elements, enabling it to react speedily to opportunities, both economic and political, without allowing ideology to impede its progress.<sup>8</sup> In common with other analysts – including Ken Menkhaus,<sup>9</sup> Matt Bryden,<sup>10</sup> and Paul D. Williams,<sup>11</sup> in their recent publications – we therefore warn against a complacent view that posits AMISOM successes as ‘victory’ without considering what the future of Al-Shabaab is likely to be. Drawing upon studies of the politics of Kenya’s Muslim communities,<sup>12</sup> we suggest that Al-Shabaab is likely to exploit the deeply rooted disaffection amongst the peoples of the Kenya coast and north-east in gaining recruits to its banner. These affiliates may only see Al-Shabaab’s black standard as a temporary flag of convenience, but that may be enough to incubate and evolve an Al-Shabaab-led insurgency within Kenya.

The article begins with a review of Operation Linda Nchi, which saw the Kenyans capture the port of Kismayo. It then considers the ‘blowback’ of retaliatory attacks, including the massacre at Mpeketoni in June 2014, and the response of the security forces, which culminated in Operation Usalama Watch (launched in April 2014 in an effort to disrupt Al-Shabaab support within Kenya). The implication of our analysis, discussed in the concluding section, is that Al-Shabaab is reinventing itself to exploit the wider sense of economic and social grievance amongst Kenya’s disadvantaged Muslim populations in its north-eastern and coastal provinces. The resilience of Al-Shabaab presents the key challenge: unless the Kenyan state radically changes its approach, this could prove to be a war that Kenya did not want, mostly to be fought on Kenyan soil.<sup>13</sup>

8. Marchal, ‘The rise of a jihadi movement’, pp. 41–8.

9. Ken Menkhaus, ‘Al-Shabaab’s capabilities post-Westgate’, *CTC Sentinel* 7, 2 (2014), pp. 4–9.

10. Matt Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A strategy of choice or necessity?* (CSIS, Washington, DC, February 2014).

11. Paul D. Williams, ‘After Westgate: Opportunities and challenges in the war against Al-Shabaab’, *International Affairs* 90, 4 (2014), pp. 907–23; Stig Jarle Hansen, ‘Somalia: Rumours of Al-Shabaab’s death are greatly exaggerated’, *African Arguments*, 25 April 2013, <<http://africanarguments.org/2013/04/25/somalia-rumours-of-al-shabaab-s-death-are-greatly-exaggerated—by-stig-hansen/>> (25 August 2014).

12. Kadara Swaleh, ‘The radicalization of Sheikh Aboud Rogo and the formation of a jihadist ideology in coastal Kenya’ (Paper at the conference on ‘Pirates and Preachers’, Roskilde University, May 2014); Juma Ndlovu, ‘The politicisation of Muslim organisations and the future of Islamic-oriented politics in Kenya’, *Islamic Africa* 3, 1 (2012), pp. 25–53; International Crisis Group (ICG), ‘Kenya: Al-Shabaab – closer to home’ (Africa Briefing 102, Nairobi, 2014); Justin Willis and Hassan Mwakimako, ‘Islam, politics and violence on the Kenya coast’, *Observatoire de la Corne d’Afrique*, 2014, <[http://www.lam.sciencespobordeaux.fr/sites/lam/files/note4\\_observatoire.pdf](http://www.lam.sciencespobordeaux.fr/sites/lam/files/note4_observatoire.pdf)> (2 October 2014).

13. Al-Shabaab intends to take its fight across the region to Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda, so a greater eastern African perspective must be kept in mind. See United Nations (UN), *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2011 (2013): Somalia*, UN doc.S/2014/726, 19 September 2014, pp. 18–21.

### *Operation Linda Nchi*

The Kenyan invasion of southern Somalia, Operation Linda Nchi, came as no surprise. More than a year before the Kenyans rolled across the border, the country's foreign minister tried to gain US support for the invasion plan, but was curtly rebuffed. The Americans doubted that such a mission could be successful, and anyway preferred other, more indirect approaches to the Al-Shabaab problem.<sup>14</sup> All the same, the US government knew of the plan to invade, as did Kenya's other Western partners – though they may not have known the precise timing.<sup>15</sup> The question then must be what prompted the Kenyans to act at this time, and without the backing of their allies? According to Bruton and Williams, three factors conspired to determine Kenya's invasion: the chronic refugee crisis on its borders, worsened by famine, which was becoming a growing security concern; the evolving anxieties of regional insecurity, fuelled by Ugandan and Ethiopian concerns, and encouraged by AMISOM's success against Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu in August 2011; and the threat posed to Kenya's economy by the destabilization of the coastal regions through Al-Shabaab activities. The goal of Kenya's policy was to create a 'friendly' buffer-zone state in Jubaland that would work in Kenya's interests.<sup>16</sup>

Since at least 2009, the Kenyans had advanced a plan to infiltrate southern Somali with trained militia to undermine Al-Shabaab's influence and build an internal force against them. The United States trained elite Kenyan troops for this task, helping the country to establish a Ranger-style fighting force.<sup>17</sup> In accord with this plan, the Kenyan military helped Azania, a rebel group led by Mohamed Abdi Mohamed (also known as Mohamed Abdi Ghandi), a French-educated anthropologist, to enter southern Somalia and establish some kind of autonomous state. Azania is also an alternative name that some Kenyan politicians use for Jubaland. In April 2011, having completed training with the Kenyan army near Isiolo, the militia led by Ghandi and made up of Somali soldiers from Ogadeni clans began operations in southern Somalia.<sup>18</sup> By then Kenya had trained a

14. David S. Cloud and Ken Dilanian, 'Kenya asks US for help with Somalia offensive', *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 2011, <<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-us-somalia-20111118,0,7985129.story?page=2>> (21 August 2014); Justin Willis and George Gona, 'Pwani C Kenya? Memory, documents and secessionist politics in coastal Kenya', *African Affairs* 112, 446 (2012), pp. 48–71.

15. Jean-Phillippe Remy, 'Kenya develops plan for satellite region of Jubaland', *Guardian*, 13 November 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/08/somali-fears-in-kenya-conflicts>> (6 December 2011).

16. Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*, pp. 55–9, 61–2; William Reno, 'Rethinking counterinsurgency in Somalia', *CTC Sentinel* 6, 4 (2013), p. 16.

17. *WaamoNews*, 'Kenya to use US- and UK-trained special forces', 3 July 2012, <<http://waamonews.com/?p=18563>> (20 August 2012).

18. Remy, 'Kenya develops plan'.

force of 3,000 Somali ‘counter-insurgents’, supplied with Chinese-manufactured weapons – though Ghandi had command of (at best) only 500 men.<sup>19</sup> To open another front against Al-Shabaab, Kenya also supported the Ras Kamboni Brigade of Sheikh Ahmed Madobe.<sup>20</sup> This group briefly took the town of Dhobley in April 2011.<sup>21</sup> Madobe then had 600 men under arms.

The actions of these surrogate forces and their supposed ‘successes’ are a matter of dispute. From the beginning, the Ethiopians objected to the Kenyan scheme as they feared it would give too much influence to Ogadeni activists sympathetic toward the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). But in adopting surrogate forces, the Kenyans saw themselves as following the Ethiopian example: since the 1960s, the Ethiopians have meddled in Somalia’s internal politics by supporting dissident groups and cultivating militias,<sup>22</sup> and since 2007 have focused this policy on securing their Ogaden border – combined with a forceful campaign against Somali insurgents throughout the Ogaden region.<sup>23</sup> Ethiopia is home to 4 million ethnic Somalis,<sup>24</sup> many of whom support the secessionist aims of local rebel movements. For Ethiopia, as for Kenya, foreign policy in Somalia has a strong domestic dimension – even though the two countries often disagree about how this should be managed.

Kenya’s invasion went ahead without the support of its most prominent Western allies, and without a common agreement with Ethiopia, which shares a border with Jubaland. As invasion turned into occupation, this would become a critical issue, but within a month of crossing the border the Kenyans appeared to have engineered broad-based diplomatic support. In November 2011, President Mwai Kibaki met his Ugandan counterpart, Yoweri Museveni, and Somalia’s leader, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, in Nairobi. Declaring their unity in tackling the regional security threat presented by Al-Shabaab, their joint statement described this as an ‘historic opportunity’ to defeat Islamic terrorism.<sup>25</sup> This announcement came one day before the

19. UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia*, 2013, UN doc.S/2013/413, 13 July 2013, pp. 55–6.

20. Cedric Barnes, ‘The political economy of Jubaland’ (Briefing Paper, Africa Research Group FCO, 14 January 2010), p. 3, pp. 1–7.

21. *Hiiraan On-line*, ‘Government forces capture Dhobley’, 3 April 2011, <[http://hiiraan.com/news/2011/Apr/government\\_forces\\_capture\\_dhobley\\_town.aspx](http://hiiraan.com/news/2011/Apr/government_forces_capture_dhobley_town.aspx)> (4 June 2011).

22. Belete Belachew Yihun, ‘Ethiopian foreign policy and the Ogaden War: from containment to destabilization, 1977–91’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, 4 (2014), pp. 686–701.

23. Tobias Hagmann, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden: Search for an end to conflict in the Somali regional state, Ethiopia* (Rift Valley Institute, Nairobi, 2014).

24. Tobias Hagmann, ‘Punishing the periphery: legacies of state repression in the Ethiopian Ogaden’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, 4 (2014), p. 739, pp. 725–39.

25. Clar Ni Chonghaile, ‘Somalia, Kenya and Uganda pledge to defeat Al Shabaab’, *Guardian*, 17 November 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/17/somalia-kenya-al-shabaab-uganda>> (21 November 2011).

meeting of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa, where the agreement was reached to incorporate Kenya's invading forces within the African Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) led by Uganda.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, bilateral discussions between Kenya and Ethiopia resulted in an agreement on the support that Ethiopia might give against Al-Shabaab.<sup>27</sup> The next week saw heavy Ethiopian military deployments moving toward Baidoa, protecting the northern flank of Kenya's advance, and the arming of local militias opposed to Al-Shabaab was stepped up.<sup>28</sup> In December 2011, the Ethiopian intervention was strengthened, with soldiers of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) taking up strategic positions within southern and central Somalia until May 2012.<sup>29</sup> In June 2012, the KDF signed the memorandum of agreement that formally incorporated them as part of AMISOM.<sup>30</sup> By April 2013, Kenya had a total of 4,402 troops on the ground in southern Somalia, each being paid for by the EU at a rate of US\$1,028 per month.<sup>31</sup> The invaders had become peacekeepers – in name if not in deed.

It was always the intention of the KDF's senior commanders that they would join the peacekeeping force.<sup>32</sup> This brought considerable financial advantages, as well as greater professional experience through collaboration with other militaries. It also gave the invasion far stronger international legitimacy. Unwilling to be trammelled by the external influence of European paymasters, the Ethiopians continued to act only 'in aid' of AMISOM. Both armies, the KDF and the ENDF, understood that the campaign against Al-Shabaab might be protracted, and costly. The KDF's commander-in-chief, Karangi, was circumspect: 'This campaign is not time bound', he warned after two weeks of fighting. 'When the Kenya government and the people of this country feel that they are safe enough from the Al-Shabaab menace, we shall pull back. Key success factors or indicators will be in the form of a highly degraded Al-Shabaab capacity.'<sup>33</sup>

26. *BBC News Online*, 'Kenya offers to boost AU forces', 17 November 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15770901>> (17 November 2011).

27. *Kenya News24*, 'Kenya, Ethiopia meet for Somalia talks', 17 November 2011, <<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Kenya-Ethiopia-meet-for-Somali-talks-20111117>> (18 November 2011).

28. Jeffrey Gettelman, 'Ethiopian troops set to enter Somalia', *New York Times*, 20 November 2011, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/21/world/africa/ethiopian-troops-enter-somalia-witnesses-say.html>> (21 November 2011).

29. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline'.

30. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 27.

31. Claire McEvoy, *Shifting priorities: Kenya's changing approach to peacebuilding* (NOREF Report, Oslo, May 2013), p. 2; Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*, p. 58.

32. Paul D. Williams, 'Fighting for peace in Somalia: AMISOM's seven strategic challenges', *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17, 3–4 (2013), pp. 222–47.

33. *Los Angeles Times*, 'Kenya military chief suggests Somalia incursion could be long', 30 October 2011, <<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-kenya-somalia-20111030,0,4326630.story>> (31 October 2011).



This, of course, was an easier position to adopt knowing that the EU would pay, and not the Kenyan exchequer.<sup>34</sup>

Wider economic issues also loomed large. On 8 November 2011, *The Guardian* reported that the Kenyan invasion was intended to secure the coastal region and to establish Lamu as a development port. This was linked to plans for a second 'transport corridor' across Kenya, exploiting a potential outlet for oil from South Sudan. According to the report, the port scheme, and connecting transport network, had already secured an investment of US\$10 billion from the Chinese.<sup>35</sup> These early reports have since been corroborated, and Kenya is now openly canvassing investors for its visionary schemes for the development of the northern districts, including the border region with southern Somalia.<sup>36</sup> Add to this the discovery of substantial oil deposits near Lake Turkana, and oil exploration in several off-shore blocks within Kenya's disputed maritime waters with Somalia, and it is easy to see how economic arguments have gained traction in analysis of the invasion and its motivations.<sup>37</sup> After many decades of neglect and disregard, Kenya is now pursuing the economic integration of its northern region, and the security of southern Somalia is a critical element in this.

Having established the political and economic contexts of the intervention, let us consider the military aspect. Two Kenyan battalions, with armoured vehicles and air support, were deployed to Somalia at the start of Operation Linda Nchi. Additional troops have entered the country since then; by July 2014 there were 4,400 Kenya soldiers in southern Somalia and the Kenya navy was patrolling Jubaland's coastline.<sup>38</sup> Avoiding full engagement, Al-Shabaab fighters retreated to defensive positions, ambushing the KDF whenever the opportunity arose. Kenyan air strikes sought to dislodge Al-Shabaab fighters from key towns, including Afmadow, and targeted training camps and supply bases, but with only limited success. The Kenyans progressed to within five kilometres of Afmadow five days into the invasion, where they later linked up with Madobe's Ras Kamboni forces and the Somali National Army (SNA) in early November, but it would be several months before they finally wrenched the town from Al-Shabaab

34. The final EU agreement allowed for the payment of 4,660 Kenyan soldiers from 2 June 2012: McEvoy, 'Shifting priorities', p. 3.

35. Remy, 'Kenya develops plan'.

36. The primary document is Government of Kenya, 'Flagship projects: Lamu port and new transport corridor development to southern Sudan and Ethiopia', 20 March 2013, <<http://www.vision2030.gop.ke/index/php/pillars/project/Enablers%20and%20Macro/181>> (20 August 2014).

37. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, 'Peace, politics and petroleum in Somalia', *African Affairs* 112, 449 (2013), pp. 666–75; UN, *Monitoring Group* 2013, pp. 247–9; David M. Anderson and Adrian Browne, 'The politics of oil in eastern Africa', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, 2 (2011), pp. 369–412.

38. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline'.

control. There is little information on casualties and costs of the operations, with the Kenyan press preferring upbeat coverage of the war in the early months. However, estimates suggest that the first five months of the campaign cost the Kenyans \$180 million,<sup>39</sup> and that more than 50 Kenyan soldiers may have been killed.<sup>40</sup> The Ethiopians, also circumspect in declaring losses in their struggles against Al-Shabaab, have acknowledged heavy casualties.<sup>41</sup>

It was not until August 2012 that the KDF finally came within striking distance of Kismayo. Though Al-Shabaab is known to receive funding from wealthy backers in the Muslim world,<sup>42</sup> control of the lucrative trade through Kismayo's busy port was critical to their strong financial position. Al-Shabaab reputedly raised revenues of \$25 million per annum from taxing Kismayo's trade.<sup>43</sup> Sugar, cement, and some manufactured goods are imported into Kismayo, for onward illegal transportation to Kenya; the principal export has been charcoal, produced locally for shipment to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. Al-Shabaab takes rents from the producers of charcoal in the areas it controls, taxing the vehicles bringing bagged charcoal to Kismayo, and also taxing exports leaving the port. Since 2007 this trade had grown markedly, despite international efforts to close the port. Many vessels discharging legal cargoes at Mogadishu afterwards docked in Kismayo to load illegal charcoal, to avoid returning from the Somali coast unladen.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, seizing the port of Kismayo was the KDF's primary objective, because in this way it hoped to destroy Al-Shabaab's economic strength and thus make it harder for it to sustain control in the rural areas of southern Somalia.

The final assault, Operation Sledge Hammer, commenced at dawn on 28 September 2012 with an amphibious landing on Kismayo's northern beach – nearly a year after the Kenyans first crossed the border. There was little resistance, and the port was easily secured.<sup>45</sup> This was heralded as the beginning of Al-Shabaab's demise,<sup>46</sup> but in the months that followed nothing of the kind happened. Having made an orderly retreat from the port, Al-Shabaab regrouped at strategic points throughout Jubaland and

39. Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*, p. 62.

40. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline'.

41. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, pp. 28–9; Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*, p. 48.

42. Hansen, *Al-Shabaab*.

43. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 38.

44. For a full account, see UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia, 2012*, UN doc.S/2012/544, 13 July 2012; UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2013*.

45. Katherine Zimmerman, 'Al Shabaab after Kismayo', *Critical Threats*, 3 October 2012, <<http://www.criticalthreats.org>> (14 August 2014).

46. For example, Hussein Solomon and Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, 'Factors responsible for Al-Shabab's losses in Somalia', *CTC Sentinel* 5, 9 (2012), pp. 7–9.



the Shebelle Valley. Although they were spread thinly, they were effective in keeping the Kenyans locked into Kismayo, while harassing them every time they moved to extend the “liberation” through the rural areas. Al-Shabaab attacks in southern Somalia increased over the six months following the capture of Kismayo. From October to December 2012, there were 178 attacks, including 70 combat engagements, 39 grenade attacks and 43 assassinations of Somalis believed to be assisting the invaders or obstructing Al-Shabaab. In the next three months, to the end of March 2013, this increased to 192 attacks, of which 78 were combat engagements, 26 grenade attacks, and 52 assassinations.<sup>47</sup> Over this period, Al-Shabaab recaptured several towns that had been “liberated” by the ENDF the previous year. Intelligence gathered in early 2013 suggested that Al-Shabaab’s 5,000-strong militia was still largely intact and fully operational, that they had stockpiled weapons in anticipation of mounting a retaliatory assault once international forces had reduced in intensity, and that the loss of Kismayo made no difference to their capacity to function in southern Somalia.<sup>48</sup>

An explanation of how Al-Shabaab maintained their strongholds in southern Somalia, and their fighting force, despite the loss of Kismayo, can be found in the rent-seeking behaviour of the KDF and its allies. In early October 2012, the Kenyans ensconced Ahmed Madobe and his Ras Kamboni Brigade in the city and the port. Madobe represented a strong leader with links to the local Ogadeni traders who dominated the economy of Kismayo, having for many years past directed illicit trade throughout southern Somalia and into Kenya. Before the invasion, between 20,000 and 40,000 metric tons of sugar entered Kenya from Kismayo each year, bringing Al-Shabaab \$800,000 in annual revenues.<sup>49</sup> The principal export handled by these traders is charcoal, bound for the Creek of Sarjah in Dubia and the ports of Saudi Arabia. Taxes were paid to Al-Shabaab in this trade also. Although the seizure of Kismayo was supposed to close down these revenue streams, only days after taking the port the KDF allowed one ship and two dhows into the dock to offload cargoes of cement and sugar, and to begin loading charcoal. Over the next month, Kenyan pressure mounted to reopen the port.<sup>50</sup> By then a stockpile of charcoal had built up on the quayside – estimated at an astonishing 4 million sacks with an export value of \$60 million. When the UN and the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu refused to sanction the port’s reopening, ‘the KDF, Madobe, and his Ras Kaboni forces took a unilateral decision to begin the export of charcoal

47. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 49.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

49. UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008): Somalia, 2011*, UN doc.S/2011/433, 18 July 2011, p. 183.

50. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, pp. 421–3.

from Kismayo ... in flagrant violation of the ban'.<sup>51</sup> By 7 November 2012, the Kenyans had allowed 15 vessels into the port (13 dhows and 2 ships), and all were busily loading charcoal.

Evidence assembled by the UN shows that 20 vessels left the port in November 2012 loaded with 700,000 sacks of charcoal, and 22 vessels left in December with 800,000 sacks. Locally each sack wholesales at \$5–6, but the export value is \$15–16 per sack. Total export value in these two months therefore amounted to \$24 million. The port manager at Kismayo, a Kenyan Somali of the Ras Kamboni faction, was at this time taxing charcoal exports at \$1.20 per sack, thus accruing a direct revenue in the first two months of approximately \$1.8 million. During 2013, monthly exports rose to 1 million sacks, further inflating the revenues and leading some to accuse Madobe of running Kismayo as if it were his 'personal fiefdom'.<sup>52</sup>

Kismayo's charcoal business is handled by around 40 traders, many of them long-standing associates of Al-Shabaab. Since the Kenyan capture of the port, new charcoal supplies have flooded in, mostly from the Badade district along the Kenya border. This area is controlled by Al-Shabaab, which taxes the trucks leaving Badade at Buula Xaaji checkpoint. In 2013, Al-Shabaab took \$250 from each vehicle, and up to \$500 from the larger 10-ton trucks. At its peak, this checkpoint took \$650,000 per month.<sup>53</sup> By 2014, the haulage taxation had regularized across the checkpoints manned by Al-Shabaab, amounting to \$120 per truck plus a charge of \$0.70 per bag, and the tax levied by the Ras Kamboni port master had doubled – presumably eating further into the profits of producers and traders.<sup>54</sup> Charcoal also goes to several beach ports controlled by Al-Shabaab, most notably Barawe, and the same traders operate at these ports, essentially on similar terms.<sup>55</sup> It remains to be seen whether the recent AMISOM capture of Barawe will result in a curtailment of the trade there.

The most recent report of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia shows that the illegal trade through Kismayo continued in similar fashion over the period from July 2013 to May 2014. Over these months, 161 vessels were seen loading charcoal, the 'conservative estimate' being that 'at the very least 6.75 million bags of charcoal were exported'. It is conceded that the actual trade could be double this.<sup>56</sup> But the war against Al-Shabaab did have a visible impact on the trade during this year: from January 2014, Al-Shabaab decided to direct most charcoal supplies through Kismayo

51. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

52. Anon., 'Somalia: regional alliances shifting', *Africa Confidential* 54, 2 (18 January 2013), p. 10.

53. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 39.

54. UN, *Monitoring Group 2014*, pp. 338–9.

55. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 427.

56. UN, *Monitoring Group 2014*, pp. 46–7.

because of growing concerns about the security situation at Barawe and the danger of traders giving away information relating to the organization's headquarters.<sup>57</sup> Despite such caution, the UN Report for 2014 concluded: 'Al-Shabaab continues to benefit from revenue generated, on a scale greater than when it controlled Kismayo, at charcoal production sites, from checkpoints along trucking routes and from exports, in particular at Kismayo and Barawe, all of which to date have been uninterrupted by the military offensive against the group.'<sup>58</sup>

The architecture of the charcoal business has remained intact, therefore, beyond the fall of Kismayo, although its revenues are now divided three ways – between Al-Shabaab, the Ras Kamboni forces who run the port of Kismayo, and the Kenya business interests facilitated by the KDF. Taking account of the increase in new charcoal production, Al-Shabaab's annual revenues from the trade have increased above the \$25 million estimated in 2011. Instead of diminishing Al-Shabaab's resources, Kenya's invasion appears to have made them richer.

Madobe's tenure in Kismayo has also brought political problems. An IGAD-sponsored initiative to create Jubaland as a federal state of Somalia was launched in July 2012 with the backing of Mogadishu and the support of several southern Somalia parties. However, in December 2012 a further IGAD pronouncement gave Kenya and Ethiopia authority to determine 'the political and administrative arrangements for the liberated areas' as part of a wider stabilization plan.<sup>59</sup> This was viewed with alarm by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu, who saw the risk of external meddling in Kismayo's affairs. When, in May 2013, Madobe declared himself head of a new Jubaland state, claiming to have local support, Mogadishu refused to recognize his claim – seeing these events as nothing more than clan factionalism.<sup>60</sup> Madobe's move can be interpreted as part of Kenya's scheme to create a buffer state, but it proved highly contentious with Ethiopia. Having previously controlled Kismayo from 2006, as a warlord of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), when he ousted the militia controlled by Barre Adan Hiiraale, Madobe was then forced to flee from the city in the face of an ENDF onslaught. He returned in August 2008 as commander of Hizbuk-Islam with the Al-Shabaab forces that recaptured Kismayo, surviving only a few months until his Ras Kamboni Brigade split into factions and those affiliated with Al-Shabaab expelled

57. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

59. McEvoy, 'Shifting priorities', p. 5.

60. *AFP*, 'Ex-Islamist Somali warlord elected "president"', *KismaayoNews*, 15 May 2013, <<http://kismaayonews.com/2013/05/15/ex-islamist-somali-warlord-elected-president-of-key-region-afp/>> (24 August 2014).

him from the port.<sup>61</sup> Thus, while Madobe had rapidly re-established himself in Kismayo in October 2012, not everyone welcomed his return.

In reaction to Madobe's declaration of the new state of Jubaland, a rival claimant emerged. This was Barre Adan Hiiraale, the militia leader Madobe had ousted from Kismayo in 2006. Like Madobe, Hiiraale is a man with an interesting past. Another warlord from the worst days of southern Somalia's violent collapse, Hiiraale led the Allied Somali Forces (ASF), known from 2001 as the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA). In 1999, following General Hersi Morgan's defeat in Kismayo, Hiiraale was installed as 'Governor' of the port city, a position he held without serious challenge until 2006. Over these years, Hiiraale supported the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu, becoming Minister of Defence in 2001. With the rise of the ICU early in 2006, the JVA were defeated and forced to flee from Kismayo, regrouping in Gedo with Ethiopian support. Though Hiiraale managed to regain control of Kismayo in early 2007, after a short but severe bout of fighting the port decisively fell to the forces of Al-Shabaab in August 2008. For the next four years, Hiiraale was held by the Ethiopians at Dolow, though whether this was imprisonment or protective custody is difficult to discern. His 'release' came in May 2012, when, with Ethiopian backing, he established a base at El Wak, in southwestern Somalia, with a militia of more than 200.<sup>62</sup>

Though it is overly simplistic to see either Madobe or Hiiraale merely as clients of Kenya and Ethiopia, there is little doubt that the Ethiopians have supported Hiiraale as a means to challenge Madobe and the Kenyan strategy.<sup>63</sup> In May 2013, with both men vying for control in Kismayo, it appeared that renewed violence was likely, even involving Al-Shabaab fighters taking sides with Hiiraale's militia.<sup>64</sup> Kenya's position was ultimately undermined by a typically shrewd piece of Ethiopian diplomacy, when in August 2013 they negotiated an agreement in Addis Ababa between Madobe and the Federal Government of Somalia. Under the terms of the agreement, Madobe was given authority to head a Jubaland administration for a period of two years, but management of Kismayo port and airport was to be transferred to the Federal Government after six months. The agreement allows for Madobe's military forces to be integrated with the Somalia

61. United Nations (UN), *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008): Somalia, 2010*, UN doc.S/2010/91, 10 March 2010, pp. 16–17; UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, pp. 121–2.

62. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, pp. 1, 25–6; Barnes, 'Political economy of Jubaland'.

63. Paul D. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia: The African Union Mission and the next stage in the war against Al-Shabaab', *RUSI Journal* 159, 2 (2014), pp. 57–8.

64. Matt Bryden, *Somalia redux? Assessing the new Somali Federal Government* (CSIS Report, Washington, DC, August 2013), p. 22.

National Army.<sup>65</sup> In case Madobe or the Kenyans should try to renege on this deal, Hiiraale still sits in the wings ready to mobilize a rejuvenated JVA. In all of these political manipulations clan politics have been to the fore, shaping the actions of all parties, including Mogadishu and the Ethiopians.

*AMISOM's surge, Al-Shabaab's purge*

Having captured Kismayo by October 2012, AMISOM commanders were reluctant to push on without reinforcements. Its manpower stretched, and Al-Shabaab's retaliatory tactics proving successful, AMISOM resolved to hold what they had and consolidate. This was a necessary decision, welcomed by the Kenyans, but it gave Al-Shabaab valuable time to regroup and reorganize.<sup>66</sup> By the middle of 2013, the dangers of this tactic were apparent, as Al-Shabaab mounted a wave of attacks in the heart of territory held by AMISOM, especially in Mogadishu: the 14 April 2013 attack on the city's courthouse; the ruthlessly executed attack of 19 June 2013 on the UN compound; and the embarrassing assault on the Turkish embassy of 17 July 2013. A review of AMISOM strategy, in late August 2013, finally recommended a new offensive.<sup>67</sup>

The AMISOM surge was now prepared for central and southern Somalia.<sup>68</sup> First, in early November, UN Security Council Resolution 2124 provided for expansion of AMISOM, and increased support for the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF).<sup>69</sup> Ethiopia then agreed to work inside AMISOM and, from 22 January 2014, 4,000 ENDF troops joined the AU peacekeeping force, bringing total strength to 22,000.<sup>70</sup> Though already heavily deployed in Somalia, the experience, professionalism, and aggression the Ethiopians brought to AMISOM had an immediate impact. In addition, AMISOM also adopted a new 'Concept of Operations' in January 2014, allowing a sustained offensive against Al-Shabaab in collaboration with the SNSF.<sup>71</sup>

The KDF implemented the surge from early November 2013, targeting Al-Shabaab in Middle and Lower Juba, and in Bay.<sup>72</sup> It is not clear how

65. Abera Wendoson, 'Somalia gives recognition to Jubaland', *Ethiopia Herald*, 28 August 2013, <<http://www.ethpress.gov.et/herald/index.php/herald/news/3845-somalia-gives-recognition-to-jubaland-interim-administration?tmpl=component&print=1&page=>> (24 August 2014).

66. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia', p. 53.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4.

68. Williams, 'After Westgate', p. 908.

69. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia', pp. 54–5.

70. Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 6.

71. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia', p. 53.

72. AMISOM, 'AMISOM resumes military operations against al-Shabaab', press release, 31 October 2013, <<http://amisom-au.org/2013/10/amisom-resumes-military-operations-against-al-shabaab/>> (24 August 2014).

successful these missions had proved to be before the onset of the *Gu* rains of 2014, although from February onwards there were gains made in the Ethiopian areas to the north, with Garbaharey, Raddhuure, and several other towns being captured and, by October, the fall of Barawe. As Paul Williams notes, these offensive actions accurately reflected the reality of what was needed on the ground.<sup>73</sup> The critical discussions boiled down to who would pay – the UN committed to training Somalia's own forces, but was reluctant to give AMISOM's African armies a blank cheque. It therefore remains to be seen if sufficient resources can be mustered to sustain the surge. Without more resources, and especially without the helicopters they have so frequently requested,<sup>74</sup> the KDF will be reluctant to take the fight to their enemy.

While AMISOM surged, Al-Shabaab underwent an internal purge. It is not entirely clear what provoked the violent bloodletting that occurred within the ranks of the movement in June 2013, although there has been speculation about the long-running disagreements between those of a nationalist persuasion and those who more firmly advocate a *jihadi* message, while recent disaffection among foreign fighters within the *mujahideen* has been well documented.<sup>75</sup> From the beginnings of Al-Shabaab's troubles in the famine of 2011, there were increasingly vehement quarrels amongst the leadership on many issues.<sup>76</sup> Whatever the spark, the action of Ahmed 'Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr' Godane, Al-Shabaab's renowned and feared *emir*, was ruthless. Documented by Matt Bryden<sup>77</sup> and Stig Jarle Hansen,<sup>78</sup> Godane's purge saw the execution of several leading commanders, including Ibrahim al-Afghani and Abdul Hamid Hashi Olhayi, and some 200 of their closest *mujahideen* in Al-Shabaab's *Amniyat* ('secret service').<sup>79</sup> Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys and Mukhtar Robow managed to escape, only to be captured by the SNSF, while other leaders were placed under arrest at Barawe.<sup>80</sup>

The purge leaves Al-Shabaab as a smaller, but not necessarily weaker movement. With its income still apparently secure, and with 5,000 fighters in the field, the movement is more united and less vulnerable. Godane's

73. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia', p. 55.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

75. Christopher Anzalone, 'Al-Shabaab's tactical and media strategies in the wake of its battlefield setbacks', *CTC Sentinel* 6, 3 (March 2013), pp. 12–16; Raffaello Pantucci, 'Bilal al-Berjawi and the shifting fortunes of foreign fighters in Somalia', *CTC Sentinel* 6, 9 (September 2013), pp. 14–17.

76. Stig Jarle Hansen, 'An in-depth look at Al-Shabaab's internal divisions', *CTC Sentinel* 7, 2 (2014), pp. 9–12.

77. Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, pp. 3–6.

78. Hansen, 'An in-depth look', pp. 10–11.

79. Menkhaus, 'Al-Shabaab's capabilities', p. 5.

80. Williams, 'After Westgate', pp. 909–10.



control appeared undisputed at this point, with the movement showing no sign of diminished capacity. The purge may thus have had less to do with ideology than with the survival of the movement in new conditions. Commentators have observed that it has brought to the fore a more extreme element, prepared to use violence in a less discriminating manner, striking at civilians and fellow Muslims.<sup>81</sup> This ruthlessness is evident in the 'hit-and-run' tactics Al-Shabaab has been deploying since the end of 2013.<sup>82</sup>

*Evidence of blowback I: The Westgate attack*

In the midst of the 2013 surge, the KDF's problems in southern Somalia were small compared to the struggles emerging back home in Kenya. From the beginning of the invasion, there was awareness that Al-Shabaab had the potential to mount retaliatory attacks in Kenya. The first of these took place within days of the KDF's invasion, with grenade and IED blasts in Garissa, attacks on police posts and checkpoints around Mandera, and explosions in the Dadaab refugee camp. A grenade attack on a Nairobi bar came within two days of the invasion; then another grenade was thrown at crowds waiting at a bus stop, followed by similar attacks over the coming months.<sup>83</sup> Western intelligence warned early in January 2012 of a plan for the intensification of Al-Shabaab's terror campaign in Kenya,<sup>84</sup> but it was not until March that a larger incident took place in the capital of Nairobi, when a bus was bombed. Since then, attacks have become a regular feature of life in the capital, targeting the general public as well as government personnel and institutions. By June 2014, it was estimated conservatively that there had been more than 80 such attacks in Kenya since the invasion. Assessments suggest that the attacks are not diminishing, but becoming increasingly costly in terms of lives lost.<sup>85</sup> Al-Shabaab might have stepped up its operations within Kenya regardless of the invasion, but the evidence below suggests that Kenya's actions brought about a significant refocusing of Al-Shabaab activity.

The spectacular assault by Al-Shabaab on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall, beginning on 21 September 2013, provided the most substantive indication of the challenges confronting Kenya's beleaguered security forces. Using small arms and grenades, the *mujahideen* entered the mall at midday on a busy Saturday.<sup>86</sup> Shooting and explosions began in two areas, with

81. Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 2.

82. Gartenstein-Ross and Appel, 'Al-Shabaab's insurgency'.

83. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline'.

84. Duncan Miriri, 'Britain warns of militant attacks on Kenya', *Reuters*, 9 January 2012, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/09/uk-kenya-somalia-warning-idUSLNE80800M20120109>> (12 January 2012).

85. Gartenstein-Ross and Appel, 'Al-Shabaab's insurgency'.

86. Kenya National Assembly, *Report of the Joint Committee on Administration and National Security, Defence and Foreign Relations on the Inquiry into the Westgate Terrorist Attack, and other*

reports that attackers singled out non-Muslims, but fired randomly elsewhere. The Kenyan security forces initially made a rapid and effective response, led by the Recce Unit (the Presidential Guard) of the police paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU), who have specialist anti-terror training. By the end of the first day, this unit pinned down the main group of attackers, but failures elsewhere meant that even by the second day of the siege the site was not properly “locked down”. Outside, there appeared to be no clear command structure and uncertainty about procedures. There were several credible reports of individuals moving in and out of the mall in search of relatives and friends. As a consequence, it remains unclear how many attackers there were and whether some escaped.<sup>87</sup>

As events unfolded, the response of the Kenyan security forces appeared muddled and uncoordinated. Ministerial statements revealed inconsistencies and contradictions. Misleading rumours about the number and identity of the attackers were repeated by spokespersons, amid premature claims that the mall had been secured and the attackers killed.<sup>88</sup> Official Kenyan reports finally identified only four attackers, all killed by the security forces: one was a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin, the other three were described as Somalis.<sup>89</sup> The attackers killed 67 people, and wounded more than 200 others, making it the most devastating Al-Shabaab attack to date and having a greater impact even than the Kampala ‘World Cup bombings’ of 2010.

Worst of all for Kenya’s security forces, in a highly charged incident within the shopping mall on the second day, a fire-fight developed between the GSU Recce Unit and soldiers of the KDF – who had only been deployed that Sunday morning. Shortly after the KDF entered the mall, one of them shot and killed a Recce Unit officer at close range. A prolonged battle ensued, leaving three KDF soldiers dead. It is believed the battle was triggered when members of the Recce Unit sought to prevent KDF soldiers looting. Traders at Gilgil, adjacent to Kenya’s largest army barracks, were later arrested for possession of property taken from the mall.<sup>90</sup>

The siege, seemingly under control on the evening of the first day, ultimately lasted four days, during which the mall was looted, many premises burned, and part of the structure completely destroyed. For Kenya’s

*Terror Attacks in Mandera (North-Eastern) and Kilifi (Coastal)* (Nairobi, Kenya National Assembly, 11th Parliament, 1st Session, December 2013).

87. The best narrative is *Guardian*, ‘Westgate mall attacks’, 21 September 2013, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/westgate-mall-attacks>> (10 October 2013).

88. *Ibid.*

89. Kenya National Assembly, *Report of the Joint Committee on Administration and National Security*.

90. Paul Ilado and Kamore Maina, ‘Westgate operation was bungled – Uhuru’, *The Star* (Nairobi), 10 October 2013, <<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-138924/westgate-operation-was-bungled-uhuru>> (24 August 2014). This includes photographs taken at funerals of two soldiers.

security forces, it was an embarrassing fiasco: for Al-Shabaab, it was a major international triumph. They tweeted their success during the siege, and broadcast valedictory statements afterwards. It was the horrors of the civilian deaths at Westgate, and the seeming incompetence of their security forces, that made the Kenyan public come to terms with the fact that they really were at war.

In early January 2012, a video released by the Al-Kata'ib Foundation introduced Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali as the newly appointed head of Al-Hijra, Al-Shabaab's Kenya operations. Asking Kenyan Muslims to recognize their oppression and join the *jihadi* movement, Iman Ali, formerly leader of Nairobi's Muslim Youth Centre (MYC), urged Muslims everywhere to 'raise your sword against the enemy that is closest to you'.<sup>91</sup> The role of Al-Hijra was first highlighted by the UN in 2011.<sup>92</sup> Since then, Al-Hijra has turned its attention to developing the war within Kenya.<sup>93</sup> From 2012, Al-Shabaab communications have targeted Kenyans through videos in Swahili featuring Kenyan *mujahideen* and audio messages addressing the Kenyan *Ummah*. An audio message in March 2013, for example, specifically addressed 'the Muslims of Kenya', featuring Al-Shabaab's Ahmed Abdi Godane urging them to 'boycott the Kenyan elections and wage *jihad* against the Kenyan military'.<sup>94</sup> Then, in May 2014, a further media release declared that the focus of Al-Shabaab's struggle had turned fully to Kenya.<sup>95</sup>

Al-Hijra has been widely associated with the MYC, and especially Nairobi's Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque – although the mosque's organizing committee vehemently deny the allegations.<sup>96</sup> Ever since Al-Shabaab's Kampala bombings of 2010, Kenya's security forces have identified the imams and younger activists linked with the MYC as dangerous fundamentalists, targeting the Riyadhha mosque as a base of Al-Shabaab recruitment. The slum area of Majengo, and the neighbouring Gikomba market, both close to Nairobi's Eastleigh district, are centres of Al-Hijra's recruitment activities.<sup>97</sup>

A specially formed police intelligence unit, the Anti-Terrorist Police Unit (ATPU) has led the security clampdown on Al-Hijra.<sup>98</sup> Since 2012,

91. *Critical Threats*, 'Linda Nchi – Timeline'; Nzes, 'Al-Hijra', pp. 24–6.

92. UN, *Monitoring Group 2012*, Annex 3.1.

93. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 15.

94. *Ibid.*, pp. 80–1.

95. AFP, 'Somalia's al-Shabaab chief says war shifting to Kenya', 22 May 2014, <<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/somalia-s-Al-Shabaab-chief-say-war-shifting-to-kenya/-/2558/2323312/-/ict24e/-/index.html>> (25 May 2014).

96. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 16, and Annex 1.3.

97. Nzes, 'Al-Hijra', pp. 24–5.

98. Open Society Foundations, *Counterterrorism and human rights in Kenya and Uganda: The World Cup bombings and beyond* (Open Society Foundations, New York, NY, 2012).

Al-Hijra's alleged supporters have been rounded up in numerous 'catch-and-release' raids on mosques and other Muslim gathering places in Nairobi, Mombasa, and throughout the Coastal Province. There have also been several unexplained killings of prominent Muslim activists, and it is widely alleged that the ATPU are behind these actions, perhaps supported by external security agencies. The UN has confirmed that the US government sponsors the Al Shabaab/East Africa Al-Qaida Disruption Initiative, to support East African security services in combating terrorism, but they stop short of accusing any agency of direct responsibility for killings and abductions.<sup>99</sup>

Press reports document the assassinations of more than 21 Muslim clerics and youth leaders since early 2012. Not all were suspected of Al-Hijra sympathies, as some were victims of Al-Shabaab retaliation, but the overall impact has rocked Kenya's Muslim communities. Officers of Kenya's ATPU admit being present at some killings, but deny 'assassinations'. The killings have generated a climate of fear and anxiety amongst Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion: and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is precisely the intention.<sup>100</sup> The deaths and disappearances began in April 2012, when radical preacher Sheikh Mohammed Kassim was abducted. His body was later identified in Kilifi mortuary. Sheikh Samir Khan went missing on the same day: his mutilated body was found in Tsavo forest. Khan was believed to be involved in Al-Shabaab recruitment, and was a close associate of Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohamed. Rogo, a preacher at Mombasa's Masjid Musa mosque, was subjected to a UN Security Council travel ban and asset freeze, having been accused as the 'ideological leader' of Al-Hijra and the MYC. He was gunned down on 27 August 2012, when men stopped his vehicle close to his home.<sup>101</sup> Rogo's wife and other family members witnessed the assassination. No one has claimed responsibility for Rogo's death, though among coastal Muslims it is widely believed that the security forces were responsible. In the days following his death, there were riots and street protests in Mombasa.<sup>102</sup>

99. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 16.

100. See MUHURI and Open Society Justice Initiative, *We're tired of taking you to the Court: Human rights abuses by Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit* (Open Society Foundations, New York, NY, 2013); Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'Kenya: Killings, disappearances by anti-terror police', press release, 18 August 2014, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/08/18/kenya-killings-disappearances-by-anti-terror-police>> (23 August 2014); IRIN, 'Kenya: Gunned down in Mombasa', IRIN, 28 July 2014, <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/100412/gunned-down-in-mombasa-the-clerics-that-have-died>> (24 August 2014); UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*.

101. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 15.

102. Swaleh, 'Radicalization of Sheikh Aboud Rogo'.

Two youth leaders, Omar Faraj and Titus Nabiswa, were then killed in a shoot-out with the ATPU in Mombasa's Majengo district on 29 October 2012. Over this same period many alleged Al-Hijra members also 'disappeared'.<sup>103</sup> All of these individuals had been linked with Al-Hijra's fund-raising and recruitment, some of them linked to the Kampala bombings. The next spate of violence began in June 2013, when Kassim Omollo and Salim Mohammed Nero were killed in separate ATPU operations. Weapons and bomb-making equipment was retrieved from their homes. Further violence erupted in October 2013, with the murder of Rogo's alleged successor, Ibrahim Ismail, and three of his associates. Then, on 1 April 2014, in the most spectacular incident of all, Sheikh Abubakar Shariff 'Makaburi', a prominent radical preacher at the controversial Masjid Musa mosque, was sprayed with bullets from an automatic weapon at close range as he left the Shanzu Law Courts. A vocal supporter of Al-Qaeda, and another on the UN sanctions list, Makaburi was infamous throughout Kenya for claiming the Westgate attack was 'justified'.<sup>104</sup>

Al-Shabaab's threat against moderate Muslim preachers has been evident since before 2011, but their tactical response seems to have begun in December 2013, with the assassinations of two men in Malindi, accused of 'giving information to local and international security agencies'.<sup>105</sup> The most prominent victim of Al-Shabaab retaliation was Sheikh Mohammed Idriss, shot through the chest at close range in Mombasa on 10 June 2014. The murder of Idriss was viewed as a direct response from Al-Shabaab to the activities of the ATPU. Idriss was chairman of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK), and had been at the centre of a power struggle with radical Muslims at the Sakina Mosque in Mombasa. Idriss had emerged as a leading campaigner against radicalization and *jihadi* teachings,<sup>106</sup> although the Kenya security forces had previously implicated him and other CIPK leaders in supporting terrorism.<sup>107</sup>

Though this 'decapitation' of Al-Hijra has slowed the progress of the movement, the extra-judicial violence and its 'tit-for-tat' appearance has alienated Muslim opinion. In Mombasa, 'moderates' accuse 'radicals' of recruiting for Al-Hijra, while many condemn the silence of Muslim leaders when radical activists are killed or abducted.<sup>108</sup> However, understanding who is radical and who is moderate can be more complicated than it seems:

103. UN, *Monitoring Group 2013*, p. 15.

104. Nzes, 'Al-Hijra', p. 25.

105. IRIN, 'Kenya: Gunned down', p. 4.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

107. Sara Thordsen, 'New Muslim activism in Kenya' (Aarhus University, MA thesis in Political Science, 2009), <<http://www.specialer.sam.au.dk/stat/2009/19990725/19990725.1pdf>> (20 August 2014).

108. MUHURI and Open Society Justice Initiative, *We're tired of taking you to the court*.

it is wrong to assume that all Salafists necessarily advocate violence, or support Al-Shabaab, but it would also be misleading to align ‘moderates’ with the Kenyan state. Such is the marginalization of Kenya’s Muslims that few, if any, community leaders easily align themselves with the government. Distrust of Kenya’s government is widespread among Muslims, making it harder to build a consensus against radicalization. Mombasa’s Muslim leaders admit they struggle to control the younger elements, alienated by years of discrimination and marginalization within Kenya.<sup>109</sup> Violence, seemingly orchestrated by the state and never investigated by law officers, serves only to worsen that alienation. According to one leading Muslim spokesman, the death of each cleric in suspicious circumstances furthers radicalization: ‘It’s gone beyond the money a recruit might earn. They are now doing it in the belief that they are being harassed, killed, and the only way is to fight back.’<sup>110</sup>

It is easy to see Al-Hijra as the instrumental creation of Al-Shabaab – a means to take the war to Kenya – but the foundations of radicalism were laid many years earlier in the alienation, disaffection, and dissent of Kenya’s Muslim community. Since at least the early 1990s, radicalization has been a particular Kenyan problem – one that the security forces have been slow to take seriously. While Muslim politicians have been incorporated within Kenya’s main political coalitions, Islamic politics is little understood in Nairobi. Attacks on churches have of course been a feature of Al-Shabaab’s campaign of violence in Kenya, seeking to provoke religious conflict. This plays to the fractures that already exist in Kenya’s politics. According to Gregory Deacon and Gabrielle Lynch, Kenya’s politics is not only fiercely dominated by a Christian ethos, but this has taken on a pentecostal and stridently evangelical tone which at best excludes Muslims and at worst is openly hostile to them.<sup>111</sup> Many Muslim leaders thus see the extra-judicial killings, and the indiscriminate harassment of ‘suspects’, as indicating that the rights of Muslims are not recognized by the Kenyan state, while many Christians wonder why more Muslim leaders do not come forward to condemn Al-Shabaab.

### *Evidence of blowback II: Usalama Watch and Gaidi Mtaani*

The wave of extra-judicial killings and disappearances has done nothing to stem the flow of grenade and bomb attacks.<sup>112</sup> Following a further wave of

109. Thordsen, ‘New Muslim activism’; Willis and Mwakimako, ‘Islam, politics and violence’.

110. IRIN, ‘Kenya: Gunned down’, p. 2.

111. Gregory Deacon and Gabrielle Lynch, ‘Allowing Satan in? Toward a political economy of Pentecostalism in Kenya’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43, 2 (2013), pp. 108–30.

112. UN, *Monitoring Group* 2013, p. 15.



attacks in late March 2014, in which gunmen attacked a church at coastal Likoni, followed by three bomb blasts in Nairobi, the security forces responded with aggressive force. Operation Usalama Watch, launched 2 April 2014, began with the round-up and arrest of more than 650 residents in Nairobi's Eastleigh,<sup>113</sup> known locally as 'Little Mogadishu' because of the large number of Somali residents.<sup>114</sup> Spreading out from Eastleigh to target Somalis in South C, Lang'ata, Kawangare and Kasarani, Usalama Watch demonstrated the resolve of the security forces to an increasingly edgy general public, but the operation played into the hands of Al-Shabaab by appearing to scapegoat ethnic Somalis and to alienate Muslims.<sup>115</sup>

At the peak, more than 6,000 security personnel were deployed, including the Kenya Police and its General Service Unit, the Administration Police (another paramilitary unit), and units from the Kenya Air Force.<sup>116</sup> Areas were sealed off, house-to-house searches conducted, and specific properties and businesses targeted, including local hotels used by Somalis. Many of the raids were conducted after dark, with suspects being arrested and removed to the Kasarani stadium, or to local police stations for interrogation. Violence was commonplace, with the roughing-up and routine beating of suspects. The conduct of the operation was ill-disciplined and poorly supervised. Widespread accusations have emerged of the looting of domestic property by security officers, including the stealing of cellphones, laptops, watches, jewellery, and other personal items. Suspects were asked to produce identification documents, but, according to human rights investigators, this led to massive and widespread abuses, with bribes being sought openly: legitimate documents were rejected as 'fakes' unless bribes were paid. Though this behaviour was worse amongst the Kenya Police and the Administration Police, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) acknowledges that even GSU officers demanded bribes to release suspects. The IPOA confirms that investigations are now under way into mistreatment and bribery connected with the operation.<sup>117</sup>

Usalama Watch was launched amid a flurry of public condemnation of the disloyalty of Kenya's Somali population. Political statements condoned

113. Here we draw upon Bruzzone, 'Kenya's security crackdown'; HRW, 'Kenya: Halt crackdown on Somalis', press release, 11 April 2014, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/11/kenya-halt-crackdown-somalis>> (23 August 2014); HRW, 'Joint letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – violations in Kenyan counterterrorism operations', 29 May 2014, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/29/joint-letter-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-navanethem-pillay-regarding-violation>> (23 August 2014).

114. Neil Carrier and Emma Lochery, 'Missing states? Somali trade networks and the Eastleigh transformation', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, 2 (2013), pp. 334–52.

115. Williams, 'After Westgate', p. 908; HRW, 'Kenya: Halt crackdown'.

116. The following draws upon: Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), *Monitoring Report on Operation Sanitization Eastleigh (Usalama Watch)* (IPOA, Nairobi, 14 July 2014); Bruzzone, 'Kenya's security crackdown'; HRW, 'Kenya: Halt crackdown'.

117. IPOA, *Monitoring Report*, pp. 8–13.

the actions of the security forces against all Somalis, while the media carried scathing attacks asking citizens to be vigilant and support the security forces – regardless of their actions. In the most vitriolic piece of all, published in March 2014 (two weeks before Operation Usalama Watch), Mutuma Mathiu, managing editor at Nation Media Group, wrote: ‘every little, two-bit Somali has a big dream to blow us up, knock down our buildings and slaughter our children. ... We are at war. Let’s start shooting.’<sup>118</sup> This was nothing less than a xenophobic ‘call to arms’.<sup>119</sup> Al-Shabaab lost little time in capitalizing on this, referencing Usalama Watch’s victimization of Muslims in its Swahili-language recruitment video released in mid-May.<sup>120</sup> A more direct response came through the continuation of Al-Hijra’s campaign: a bomb attack on a Nairobi market at the end of May 2014, killed 10 and seriously injured a further 70.<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, *Gaidi Mtaani* – ‘Terrorist on the Street’ – is a propaganda magazine devoted to the discussion and promotion of Al-Shabaab. It provides evidence of the movement’s emerging strategy as it targets its principal enemy – the Kenyan state. The ineptitude of the Kenyan security services is cleverly and effectively exploited in the pages of *Gaidi Mtaani*. The first issue was published in April 2012, and up to November 2013 four issues have been produced.<sup>122</sup> Written predominantly in Swahili, the magazine also features English-language essays covering pro-Shabaab commentary and denunciations of Western and Kenyan security policy. The magazine is slick, visually powerful, professionally written and well-argued. *Gaidi Mtaani* demonstrates that Al-Shabaab (and Al-Hijra) can claim to be among the most technically competent and media-savvy of Islamist organizations. The magazine provides a powerful insight into the organization’s public relations mission, revealing important aspects of Al-Shabaab’s recruitment and propaganda strategy.

*Gaidi Mtaani*’s writers use history effectively to build the idea that Kenya’s security policies are merely a continuation of colonial oppression. Foreign interests in Kenya, particularly the economic developments on the coast, are depicted as targets for foreign exploitation that result in the harmful and unfair targeting of Somalis and Muslims more broadly. These

118. Mutuma Mathiu, ‘Are we just going to sit around and wait to be blown to bits by terrorists?’, *Daily Nation*, 20 March 2014, <<http://mobile.nation.co.ke/blogs/Are-we-just-going-to-sit-around-and-wait-to-be-blown-to-bits/-/1949942/2252048/-/format/xhtml/-/uw6jti/-/index.html>> (24 August 2014).

119. As Bruzzone notes in ‘Kenya’s security crackdown’, Kenyans of a more liberal persuasion reacted negatively toward this op-ed, but the seniority of its author appeared to carry official sanction.

120. Williams, ‘After Westgate’, p. 908.

121. Jason Straziuso, ‘Bombings kill 10, wound 70 in Kenyan market’, *ABC News*, 16 May 2014; Nzes, ‘Al-Hijra’, p. 24.

122. *Gaidi Mtaani* is available from <<http://jihadology.net/>> (24 August 2014).

modern developments are depicted as a continuation of corrupt dealings between a rentier state and foreign colonial powers, and several essays in *Gaidi Mtaani* skilfully link Al-Shabaab's current conflict with the independence struggle against British colonialism.<sup>123</sup> Such themes resonate with many Kenyan audiences and readers are exhorted to see Kenyan foreign policy in Somalia as an attack on all Muslims. Thus, the violent actions of Al-Shabaab are depicted as a rational reaction to oppression of all Muslims. The magazine depicts Al-Shabaab as fighting for the *Ummah*. Each issue draws on Koranic scripture to justify and explain Al-Shabaab's actions, done in a manner clearly intended to appeal to Kenya's Sunni Muslims.<sup>124</sup>

Kenyan military effectiveness is questioned in each issue of *Gaidi Mtaani*, also showing how the Kenyan media marginalizes Al-Shabaab activities and successes. Such an approach suggests that Al-Shabaab's only purpose is to defend the *Ummah*. The message is that Kenya is losing its war with Al-Shabaab. This is propaganda in its purest sense – promoting Al-Shabaab while mocking the enemy. But it is strikingly effective, especially as the Kenyan press has not reported military casualties and has adopted an often explicitly anti-Muslim tone.<sup>125</sup> While Kenyan media continue to report only 'good news', *Gaidi Mtaani*'s approach appears revelatory.

Lastly, but increasingly significantly, *Gaidi Mtaani* is effective in presenting Al-Shabaab as the local wing of a united global Islamic movement. Each issue makes overt comparisons between Al-Shabaab and Islamist groups around the world. The careful fusing of local issues, historical animosities, and an active global struggle are nuanced and effective.<sup>126</sup> This weaving together of international and local reporting results in a form of 'glocalization' that is particularly effective in honing an international message for a local audience.

### *Evidence of blowback III: The Mpeketoni attacks*

The final indication of "blowback" is perhaps the most troubling of all – the massacre at Mpeketoni. On 15 June 2014, the prosperous rural village of Mpeketoni, in Lamu County, was subjected to a prolonged attack. Arriving in vehicles commandeered between Witu and Lamu, armed men entered Mpeketoni, putting the bank, two hotels, and the police station to the

123. *Gaidi Mtaani*, 1 'Operation Linda Uislamu', <<http://jihadology.net/2012/04/05/issue-1-of-a-new-swahili-magazine-gaidi-mtaani/>> (24 August 2014), p. 4.

124. *Gaidi Mtaani*, 3, 'Sheikh Aboud Rogo – Chanzo cha Mabadiliko', <<http://jihadology.net/2013/03/03/new-issue-of-the-magazine-gaidi-mtaani-issue-3/>> (24 August 2014).

125. *Gaidi Mtaani*, 2, 'The long road to Kismayo', <<http://jihadology.net/2012/06/30/new-issue-of-the-magazine-gaidi-mtaani-issue-2/>> (24 August 2014).

126. Especially *Gaidi Mtaani*, 4, 'Special Edition – Westgate', <<http://jihadology.net/2013/11/12/new-issue-of-the-magazine-gaidi-mtaani-issue-4/>> (24 August 2014).

torch, and burning vehicles. The gang chanted Islamic slogans, selecting non-Muslim victims. They moved about Mpeketoni for three hours, before setting alight their vehicles and departing on foot, leaving nearly 50 villagers dead.<sup>127</sup>

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, describing Mpeketoni as a 'Christian town'.<sup>128</sup> No victim was Muslim, and none were local Bajuni people: instead the victims were predominantly Kikuyu, members of families that had come to this area in the 1970s, taking up land through a government settlement scheme. Mostly Christian, they were in every respect "outsiders". The land they farm extends far beyond the original scheme, many of the settlers having bought additional acreages: this does indeed seem an industrious haven of wealth in the midst of a poor and economically undeveloped district.<sup>129</sup> Tensions between the "outsiders" and local Bajuni were heightened in the latest local government elections, and also by land speculation in response to the plans to develop the port at Lamu.

Mpeketoni seemed an obvious Al-Shabaab target. But then Kenya's President Kenyatta declared that the attack had nothing to do with Al-Shabaab, but was the product of local politics.<sup>130</sup> It was not clear whether this referenced rivalry between Kenyatta's Jubilee coalition and the CORD opposition led by Raila Odinga; referred to local squabbles around electoral politics; reflected rumours of land grabbing in the district; or invoked the activities of the Mombasa Republican Council in promoting coastal secession.<sup>131</sup> In Kenya's toxic politics, any one of these might be plausible, but the involvement of Al-Shabaab seemed undeniable.<sup>132</sup> The truth at Mpeketoni appears to be that Al-Shabaab has recognized how effectively they can exploit local politics by harnessing it to their own cause. In this poor region, the riches promised by Lamu's development herald a brighter economic future: wealthy speculators were corruptly acquiring lands that might deflect these benefits away from local communities, as

127. Staff writers, 'Mpeketoni attacks death toll rises to 48', *Daily Nation*, 16 June 2014, <<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/mpeketoni-Lamu-gunfire-al-shabaab-terrorism/-/1056/2349860/-/yf5qvgz/-/18 June 2014>> (18 June 2014).

128. Abdullahi Boru Halakhe, 'To prevent more Mpeketonis Kenya must define Somalia exit plan', *African Arguments*, 19 June 2014, <<http://africanarguments.org/2014/06/19/to-prevent-more-mpeketonis-kenya-must-define-somalia-exit-plan-by-abdullahi-boru-halakhe/>> (20 June 2014).

129. Mazera Ndurya, 'How squatters became landowners in Lamu', *Daily Nation*, 29 June 2014, <<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/How-squatters-became-land-owners-in-Lamu/-/1056/2366012/-/36lcde/-/index.html>> (30 June 2014).

130. Denzil Musumba, 'Uhuru blames massacre on tribalism, hate politics', *Daily Nation*, 17 June 2014, <<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Uhuru-blames-massacre-on-tribalism-hate-politics/-/1056/2352306/-/wyy1laz/-/index.html>> (18 June 2014).

131. Okari, 'Mpeketoni attacks'.

132. Elkana Jacob, 'Westgate, Mpeketoni killings suspects held', *The Star*, 29 July 2014, <<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-180630/westgate-mpeketoni-killings-suspects-held>> (4 August 2014).

reported in the Kenya press many months before the murders of 15 June 2014.<sup>133</sup> Contrary to Kenyatta's protestations, Mpeketoni has everything to do with Al-Shabaab, displaying the new capacity of the movement opportunistically to link its message to local Kenyan politics.<sup>134</sup>

But Mpeketoni also signals a larger problem in controlling Kenya's vast north-eastern border. This is a natural and easy home for Al-Shabaab, where disaffection from the Kenya state amongst the local population is swelled by large numbers of refugees – not least the 400,000 Somalis in Dadaab. After a series of attacks around Dadaab in March 2014, the Kenyan authorities restricted the movement of refugees in the camp. It is significant that Al-Shabaab has maintained a high number of attacks against the KDF and the police in the border districts of Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa. For part of 2013, the KDF lost control of the town of Mandera, while a Kenya National Intelligence Service report, leaked in October 2013, acknowledged that Al-Shabaab controlled some two-thirds of Garissa County.<sup>135</sup> Regardless of the success of the KDF in Jubaland, the violence at Mpeketoni has to be seen in this rural, borderlands context. In these remote regions, the writ of the Kenya state has barely run for many years, and it is here that they will find Al-Shabaab's resilience and opportunism most challenging.

### *Implications*

Ken Menkhaus is among the analysts who emphasize that the longer-term trajectory of Al-Shabaab is one of decline from the high point of territorial control and political authority achieved in 2008. Internal factionalism, the disillusionment of the foreign cadres who joined the movement, the mishandling of the famine of 2011, and a bloody internal leadership battle in June 2013 are all cited as indicators of Al-Shabaab's weakening position and influence.<sup>136</sup> Yet, those who know the internal dynamics of the movement best of all, including Stig Hansen, warn that the movement has a determined capacity to transform itself.<sup>137</sup> Both Menkhaus and Hansen agree that the Al-Shabaab that has emerged since the fall of Kismayo is

133. Staff writers, 'Elders accuse county chief of presiding over land-grabbing', *Daily Nation*, 16 October 2013, <<http://www.nation.co.ke/counties/Elders-accuse-county-chief-of-presiding-over-land-grabbing/-/1107872/2033896/-/3vh7wj/-/index.html>> (20 October 2013).

134. Further attacks have consolidated this view: Jerome Starkey, 'Militants' firebomb campaign sows fear in Kenyan resorts', *Guardian*, 17 July 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/17/militants-firebomb-campaign-sows-fear-in-kenyan-resorts>> (17 July 2014).

135. Paul Hidalgo, 'Kenya's worst enemy: Nairobi's losing battle against militant Islam', *Foreign Affairs*, 23 April 2014, <<http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/141357/paul-hidalgo/kenyas-worst-enemy>> (12 May 2014).

136. Menkhaus, 'Al-Shabaab's capabilities', p. 4.

137. Hansen, 'Somalia: Rumours'.

‘an entity quite different from the jihadist force it represented in 2007–8’.<sup>138</sup> They differ, however, in what they think this may mean looking ahead: Menkhaus sees continued marginalization and decline, but contends that in the short term it will be more dangerous, especially to Kenya, as it strives for impact in its death-throes; Hansen, on the other hand, suggests that the new Al-Shabaab ‘remains a potent threat to both Somalia and to African states that have deployed troops to Somalia’.<sup>139</sup> It could, in his view, transform into a wider-based regional organization, posing a significant threat to stability across eastern Africa. Williams has summed this up, describing Al-Shabaab as ‘reinvented’ but ‘not resurgent’.<sup>140</sup>

As our survey has suggested, Al-Shabaab’s ‘reinvention’ may have very serious implications for Kenya. This has been elaborated with greatest clarity by Matt Bryden. Instead of thinking about Al-Shabaab only in its cultural terms, and thereby emphasizing clan and religion, Bryden views the movement primarily as an insurgency: by removing the cultural parameters that have for so long shaped our understanding of all Somali institutions, we see that Al-Shabaab ‘is not playing to win, but to survive, subvert, and surprise – to become, as T. E. Lawrence once described his irregular army during the Arab Revolt, ‘an influence, a thing invulnerable, intangible, without front or back, drifting about like a gas’.<sup>141</sup>

Looking ahead, this is the nebulous, but potentially pervasive enemy that Kenya must confront: an enemy that is no longer confined to Somalia, or even to the Somali, but one that appeals directly to the *Ummah* throughout East Africa, and especially in Kenya. This is an enemy that increasingly will use images of Muslim economic deprivation, political marginalization, and social oppression to call its followers to arms. The behaviour of the Kenyan government, and especially its security forces, towards the country’s Muslim population, in both the past and the present, provides fertile ground in which Al-Shabaab, and now Al-Hijra, can sow the seeds of further dissent and disaffection. By continuing to alienate and victimize the Muslim population, the Kenyan government is making matters worse, their actions only likely to prolong and deepen the struggle that lies ahead. There are no better recruiting agents for Al-Shabaab than the poorly trained, ill-disciplined, and corrupt soldiers and police who carried out Operation Usalama Watch.

Finally, the economic cost of Kenya’s Somalia intervention has been vast. The EU refused to pay for the presence of Kenya’s troops in Somalia over the first eight months of the invasion, leaving the KDF \$38 million

138. Menkhaus, ‘Al-Shabaab’s capabilities’, p. 5.

139. Hansen, ‘An in-depth look’, p. 9.

140. Williams, ‘After Westgate’, pp. 908–9.

141. Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 2.



poorer. But this is a relatively small proportion of the rapidly inflating defence budget: Kenya's annual national defence expenditure stood at \$587 million prior to the invasion in 2010–11, but had risen dramatically to \$821 million by 2012–13. These figures do not include an additional \$156 million spent by the National Security Intelligence Service, funding the activities of the ATPU, amongst others.<sup>142</sup> In addition, Kenya's security sector receives extensive bilateral support from external donors – the EU alone has contributed €356.7 million to Kenya between March 2007 and January 2013,<sup>143</sup> and the USA provides even more. Kenya cannot afford this, even in the medium term, and if insecurity on the current scale continues then it will have an adverse impact not only on the tourist industry (which already has been savagely hit), but also on the general investment climate. It is doubtful that even Kenya's most staunchly loyal donors can continue to subsidize the security sector in the face of the blatant corruption in Kismayo and the highly public misdemeanours of the security forces in their mishandling of the Muslim community. The military withdrawal from southern Somalia will no longer bring this war to an end: to do that, the Kenya state needs to find reconciliation, not confrontation, with its Muslim citizens. But there is little, at present, to suggest that the Kenya government has the capacity or will to achieve this.

142. McEvoy, 'Shifting priorities', p. 4. Figures from Kenya's Parliamentary Budget Office.

143. *Ibid.*